

November 1995

## Innovations Affecting Us: MLA, SLA, ALA - A Buyer's Guid to the Exhibits

Norman Desmarais

*Providence College*

Judy Luther

*ISI*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

---

### Recommended Citation

Desmarais, Norman and Luther, Judy (1995) "Innovations Affecting Us: MLA, SLA, ALA - A Buyer's Guid to the Exhibits," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 7: Iss. 5, Article 16.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1620>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.



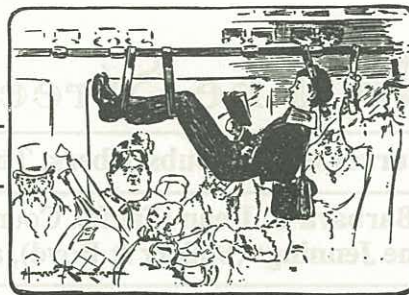
# Innovations Affecting Us

## MLA, SLA, ALA - A Buyers' Guide to the Exhibits

Column Editors: **Norman Desmarais** (Providence College)

(Normd@Brownvm.brown.edu)

**Judy Luther** (ISI) (jluther@smtpgwy.isinet.com)



by **Judy Luther**

This is the first year I've had the opportunity to attend all three conferences and to assess them from the perspective of "who's attending and what do they have to offer." Two of the three had an international orientation and all three focused on technology with the World Wide Web as a hot topic.

Each meeting had its own flavor, with a different mix of exhibitors. I decided to analyze the three conferences and grouped exhibitors into eight basic categories: 1) publishers of print/CD-ROM, 2) online database producers and access software, 3) multimedia programs and supplies, 4) furniture, shelving and equipment, 5) library automation and tech processing support, 6) booksellers and serials agents, 7) government agencies and associations attending for membership, 8) consultants, service providers, document suppliers, translators, other.

Vendors logically fell into one of these categories, and it was relatively easy to determine why they were exhibiting. I was surprised that publishers were consistently the largest group of vendors at each of the conferences. ALA exceeded 54% while SLA came second with 44% and MLA was third with publishers comprising 40% of the exhibitors.

Since these analyses were performed based on the conference programs, totals will not match numbers announced onsite. Consider these figures an estimate of relative proportions for each category. For each conference I've selected one or two vendors who offered products/services that distinguished them and mentioned them here.

### **\*\*MLA\*\***

The theme of "Health Information for the Global Village" actually covered two meetings. The 95th Annual Meeting of MLA, May 7-10 was immediately followed by the International Congress on Medical Librarianship, May 10-12, 1995, in Washington DC at the Hilton. Normal exhibit hours were extended to five days with longer hours to accommodate both groups.

Of the 124 exhibits, online/software vendors were the second highest category with 18%, followed by government/associations 12% and materials vendors 9%. The smallest category was equipment and furniture.

One of the uniquely appropriate exhibits was **Virtual Anatomy**, which is a Division of **American Digital Systems, Inc.** and is based in Salt Lake City, UT. **Virtual Anatomy** of-

fers a three-dimensional view of the entire skeletal systems with the option of selecting and enlarging specific bones by simply clicking on them. You can rotate the bones, look at six different views (superior, inferior, medial, lateral, anterior, posterior) and have the terms correctly pronounced with the audio feature.

Designed as a teaching tool, **Virtual Anatomy** is a collaboration of **Mark Nielsen**, anatomy professor at University of Utah and **Nephi Walton**, the project director who has a background in anatomy, computer programming and computer graphics. Future projects are intended to cover the entire human body. For more information, contact **Virtual Anatomy**, 159 West Broadway, Salt Lake City, UT 84101, ph: (801) 534-7545, fax: (801) 363-4153.

### **\*\*SLA\*\***

The "Power of Information Transforming the World" was the theme for the 86th Annual Conference of SLA held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada from June 10-15 with four days of exhibits.

SLA had the most online/software vendors (with a total of 41). It was their second highest category at 16% of the exhibitors and is indicative of the need for the most current information delivered to the desktop of the user in the corporate environment. Consultants, document delivery services, and translators comprised the third highest representation with 11% followed by the vendors category (booksellers and subscription agents) at 8%. The smallest category was multimedia.

Two companies, not represented at other library meetings, focused on information retrieval and delivery. **SandPoint Hoover** is a comprehensive business intelligence system for users of **Lotus Notes**, their business partner. **Fortune 1000** companies, use the software as an "Information Agent" to search, retrieve, and integrate information from multiple sources, including live newsfeeds, external online databases and internal intelligence. To learn more about **Hoover**, contact **SandPoint Company**, One Canal Park, Cambridge MA 02141, 800-775-4442, fax: 617-868-5562.

**Newsnet** is one of the information databases accessed by **Hoover**. Located in Bryn Mawr, PA. **Newsnet** provides access to more than 800 business sources in more than 30 industries. Utilizing a graphical user interface with concept searching and relevance-ranked output, the end user can view full-text articles delivered to their desktop. For more informa-

tion contact: **Newsnet**, 945 Haverford Road, Bryn Mawr PA 19010, 800-952-0122.

A competing service is **NewsEDGE**, from **Desktop Data, Inc.** Designed to run on all desktop platforms (e.g. Windows, Lotus Notes, MAC, UNIX) and all major networks operating systems, **NewsEDGE** delivers real-time information to the desktop. For more information contact: **Desktop Data, Inc.**, 1601 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA 02154, Ph: 800-255-3343.

### **\*\*ALA\*\***

"Libraries, an American Value" was the theme for the 114th Annual Conference of ALA held in Chicago June 23-28 with four days of exhibits.

Following publishers, ALA's next largest categories of exhibitors dropped dramatically. Multimedia comprised 11%, equipment and furniture 9%, while automation and materials processing were 8%. Online/software was the smallest category, less than consultants or government/association exhibits.

Among the exhibitors attending to promote their organizations, I was surprised to see the **Boy Scouts of America** and **AARP**, the American Association of Retired Persons. In addition to the more traditional library products and services we might expect to see at ALA, there were two vendors who caught my attention.

**HumanWare** ... the link between technology and people, offers products for people who are blind, visually impaired or learning disabled. They provide Braille machines, low vision aids and scanners, and speech synthesizers. **Jim Halliday**, the President and CEO, is passionate about their objective to provide "easy-to-use products and tailored services that unleash creativity in the human spirit, resulting in higher productivity and effectiveness." **Humanware, Inc.** is located at 6245 King Road, Loomis, CA, 95650, ph: 800-722-3393, fax: 916-652-7296.

Finally, touchscreens are moving from the malls into the library, thanks to **TTSS Inc.** in Rockville MD. **UC San Diego Library**, **UC Irvine Science Library**, **Chicago Public Library**, **LA Public Library** and others are using the **Selfinform** system to provide quick and easy access to categories of questions such as: areas in the library, books and locations, events, "how do I?". In business since 1980, **TTSS** is the largest developer of custom-designed interactive information systems in the US. They can be reached at 11910-G Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852, ph: 301-230-1464, fax: 301-230-1467.